

B. Mobility Indexes—What are they and how can they be used?

A Mobility Index is a tool that describes the level of services in a community. It can be used to establish a baseline or “Safety Net” of public transportation by defining minimum levels of public transportation services. It can act as a tool to assist policy makers in targeting future investments in public transportation improvements, and determine performance changes within a community.

A study conducted by the Washington State Transportation Center (TRAC) at the University of Washington proposed a concept for monitoring public transportation access and mobility in a similar way to the Level of Service (LOC) used by traffic engineers and planners to evaluate roadway capacity and use. In 1998, WSDOT worked with a consultant team to define a Public Transportation Mobility Index that would use relevant baseline data either readily available and/or currently reported to the federal or state government that would yield meaningful results.

The 1998 Mobility Index selected three measures:

1. Availability – Coverage
2. Quality – Frequency, Service Span
3. Connectivity – Connections to Local and Regional Destinations

The study also considered two other measures, which were not included in their final recommendations:

4. Affordability – Cost
5. Service Achievement – Rider Utilization

Feasibility: Availability of Data

- How readily available is the following information for your public transportation or specialized transportation system (public transit, nonprofit agency, for profit agency, tribal transportation program, or other)
 - Service area population
 - Annual passenger trips
 - Revenue vehicle miles and hours
 - Operating costs
 - Farebox revenues
 - Total fleet size

Applicability

- If WSDOT or a regional planning organization was to propose a Mobility Index that aggregated data at the county level, what would be the benefits/drawbacks?

Universality: Making Comparisons across Providers

- How important is standardization?

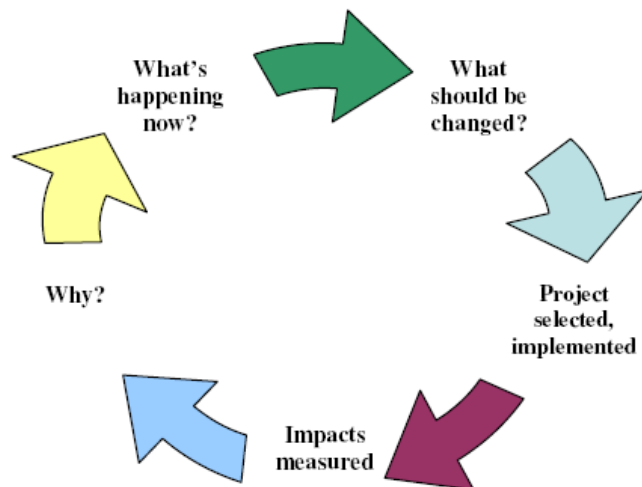
Relevance

- How do you gauge the relevance of a performance measure?
- How could a Mobility Index measure be meaningful?

Notes from March 13 Work Group

Work Group B, discussed these issues on Mobility Indexes:

Mobility Indexes: What are they and how can they be used?



- Values Change - therefore need statewide consensus on what the values are
 - Are they the same as local values?
- Values that go beyond “ADA” requirement
 - Stair service
 - Pickup patient in room at facility
 - Other
- Rural area cost per trip vs. other, shorter trip

- Focus on local goals
- Problem with inconsistency in definition of services
 - Do we have systems that can collect data?
 - Values and measures must both be consistent (across board)
- Strategy areas at local level to meet state-level goals
- Flexibility in application of state level definitions
 - More hours of services vs. frequency
- Transit specific definitions can be difficult to apply to “non-profit” services
- Is there a “matrix based” set of definitions that can be used?
 - To serve all applications or types of service
- Whose values?
 - State, local community, transits